

YOUR 4 YEAR OLD

POINTS TO REMEMBER

SAFETY

- ♥ **ESTABLISH and ENFORCE** consistent and firm rules for behavior. Let your child know how you expect him/her to behave.
- ♥ **ALWAYS** use a car seat or a secured booster seat, appropriate for your child's age and make sure it is secured properly in the back seat of the car. **CONTINUE** this until the child weighs 40 pounds or his head is higher than the back of the car seat.
- ♥ **ELIMINATE** tobacco smoke in your child's environment (daycare center, the home of your babysitter or relatives, etc). **MAKE** your car and home a no-smoking zone.
- ♥ **ALWAYS SUPERVISE** your child when he/she is around water. **MAKE SURE** the swimming pool in your community or apartment complex has a four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate. **ALWAYS** make sure your child wears a life vest if he/she is in a boat, swimming or playing in water. Floatation devices or knowing "how to swim" do not make a child safe in water. **NEVER** leave your child alone or trust another young child to supervise him/her around water. **TEACH** your child how to swim.
- ♥ **PUT** sunscreen on your child before he/she goes outside to play or swim.
- ♥ **INSTALL** smoke detectors in your home. **CHANGE** the batteries twice a year when the time changes in the spring and fall.
- ♥ **NEVER** allow your child to ride in a vehicle if you suspect the driver has been using alcohol or drugs. Do not **ALLOW** anyone using alcohol or drugs to provide childcare.
- ♥ **CONTINUE TO HAZARD PROOF** your home. Use safety locks on cabinets. Keep medicine and poisonous products in a safe, secure, locked place. Be sure there are childproof caps on all medications. If your child accidentally takes medication, or puts a poisonous product in his/her mouth, call the **POISON HOTLINE** immediately at 1-800-722-5725. **KEEP** Syrup of Ipecac and activated charcoal in your home. Do not give until you call the poison control center. **KEEP** cigarettes, matches, lighters, alcohol, and electric tools out of your child's reach.
- ♥ **PLACE** plastic safety plugs in electrical sockets and make sure electric wires, electric cords, outlets, and all appliances are protected from your child.
- ♥ **WHEN COOKING, ALWAYS** turn panhandles toward the back of the stove. **KEEP** your child away from hot stoves, space heaters, curling irons, wood stoves, fireplaces, and candles. **ALWAYS** keep matches and cigarette lighters out of a child's reach. **NEVER** leave heavy objects or hot liquids close to the edge of a table or on tablecloths where there is a danger your child could get the edge of the tablecloth and pull it down.
- ♥ **MAKE SURE** all guns in the house are locked in a secure place and the ammunition is stored in a separate place. A trigger lock is extra protection that no one can fire your gun.
- ♥ **TEACH** your child neighborhood safety skills and know where he/she is at all times. Teach him/her not to approach dogs, or animals, or talk to strangers. **KNOW** where your child is at all times and **SUPERVISE** all play near streets or driveways.
- ♥ **SUPERVISE** your child's play on playgrounds and make sure the playgrounds are safe. **CHECK** for safe surfaces under playground equipment and make sure the equipment is not made of pressure treated wood and the equipment is not over 3 feet tall.
- ♥ If you or your child are experiencing emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, **TELL** your health-care provider or call the **ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-752-6200** for help. Teach your child that some areas of the body are private. Explain to your child that no one should touch the "private parts" of his/her body without permission.

NUTRITION

- ♥ **FEED** your child at family mealtimes and give him\her two to three nutritious snacks a day. **MAKE** meal times pleasant and encourage conversation.
- ♥ **PROVIDE** nutritious snacks for your child, such as yogurt, fruits, vegetables or cheerios. Limit sweets and high-fat snacks such as candy, soft drinks, chips, etc. **ENCOURAGE** good eating habits and serve a variety of nutritious foods.
- ♥ **OFFER** your child nutritious foods and let him\her decide what and how much to eat. Choose the menu and include foods which your child likes, but do not allow him/her to dictate what foods you will have for meals. Serve meals at the table and serve a variety of foods. Expect a weight gain of 4-6 pounds a year.
- ♥ **ASK** your health care provider about the WIC program.



HEALTHY TEETH

- ♥ **TEACH AND HELP** your child to brush his\her teeth twice a day using a soft toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste.
- ♥ **LEARN** how to prevent dental injuries and what to do if a tooth is lost or fractured.
- ♥ **SCHEDULE** a dental visit for your child every six months. Check your child's mouth and gums regularly for redness, sore places, or new teeth.

CARE and INTERACTIONS

- ♥ **PRAISE** your child for good behavior. **LISTEN** to and show respect for your child
- ♥ **SHOW AFFECTION** in your family; spend individual time with each child, playing with him\her, and doing activities together you both enjoy. Show respect for your child.
- ♥ **ENCOURAGE** your child to talk about pre-school, friends and his\her activities. Show interest in your child's activities.
- ♥ **GUIDE** your child through learning experiences and allow him\her to explore and investigate nature within limits. Encourage book-sharing/reading and establish a routine "story time".
- ♥ **ENCOURAGE** your child to play alone as well as with playmates, brothers, sisters, or parents and promote physical activity in a safe environment. **PROVIDE** opportunities for your child to socialize with other children (playgroups, Sunday school, pre-school, or other community activities).
- ♥ **USE DISCIPLINE** as a method of teaching and protecting, not as a punishment. **SET** limits which are appropriate for your child and encourage self-discipline.



GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

TYPICALLY A 4 YEAR OLD CHILD:

- ♥ Can sing a song.
- ♥ Can talk about daily activities and discuss things in his home (food, appliances, etc.) .
- ♥ Draws a person with three parts.
- ♥ Can tell you his first and last name.
- ♥ Builds a tower of 10 blocks.
- ♥ Hops, jumps on one foot, throws an overhand ball, and rides a tricycle or bicycle with training wheels.

Reference: Maternal and Child Health Bureau, *Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents*, National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, 1994, Arlington, VA.